

October 2013

# Visitors to people Livability supports

<b>This document is relevant to:</b>	
Central Support Services	✓
Operational Services	✓
Community Mission	✓

## Purpose

- To guide managers and staff regarding visitors to people living in Livability residential and supported living services.
- To set out the rights and responsibilities of the individuals and their visitors.
- To highlight the risks associated with visits to people living in supported living services, where greater independence exists; and give guidance on ways to offset these risks.

## Contents

Introduction .....	2
Rights and Responsibilities of service users and their visitors .....	2
Responsibilities of Staff .....	3
Risk Assessment.....	5
Implementation and Training.....	5
Standards.....	6

## Introduction

- 1 Livability recognises the importance of visitors to the quality of life and independence of the people it supports.
- 2 Everyone has the right to receive visitors of their choice and to see them in private when they so wish. Where possible, this should be at times convenient to them rather than restricted times set by the residence. If there are times/activities when, for reasons of health and safety, visitors will not be able to enter the premises, this must be clearly stated in information available to visitors and prospective service users and clearly communicated in any induction for new service users and their families/carers.
- 3 Livability encourages visitors to its premises and works with its service users and staff to ensure that they are made welcome.
- 4 This procedure is in line with Livability's care practice policy which supports people's rights to be treated with respect and to have their individual rights and dignity recognised and valued. Livability encourages the active involvement of family and friends in the full life of all service users.
- 5 **Supported Living Services.** Users of supported living services have the right to receive the visitors they choose to their own homes. Staff working in these services should however be aware of the potential risks associated with visitors entering communal areas of group homes or other kinds of shared buildings. This procedure provides guidance on actions which can minimise potential risks.

## Rights and Responsibilities of service users and their visitors

- 6 The guidance below is relevant where service users are assessed as able to make independent and reasonable decisions regarding visitors.
- 7 Where conditions of the Mental Capacity Act apply, managers of the service will work with the service users and their representatives/family or carers to determine how they can best benefit from visits and from whom.
- 8 Where possible, service users should be encouraged to share with key workers information regarding people that they expect to make visits. Where a service user wishes staff to make contact with visitors on their behalf visitors' contact information should be recorded in service users' care records.
- 9 It is helpful for the service users to share information with staff regarding the nature of their relationship to visitors e.g. friend, relative, partner, and the expected frequency of visits. Staff may also, where appropriate seek this information from service users' family/carers. This will not restrict the service user from identifying their own visitors or from choosing to receive visits from individuals who are not known to their family. Any agreements made with service users regarding visitors will be treated as confidential to the service user and staff of the service.

- 10 Service users have the right to decline a visit. In the case of regular visitors this should where possible be discussed in advance. Agreements in this respect should be recorded on the service users' records.
- 11 Where agreements are made staff are expected to respect and support the service user's decision at all times.
- 12 In the case of a visit where no previous agreement has been reached, staff should respect and support the service user's right to decline the visit at the time. Any such occurrence should be discussed with the service user and where appropriate their representative as soon as possible afterwards, and agreements recorded in their file.
- 13 A written record of any agreement regarding unwanted visitors should be maintained on the service user's care file with a copy provided to the service user.
- 14 All visitors are asked to respect the rights of other service users to dignity, privacy, security and safety as well as the ground rules of the establishment - for example, with regard to smoking or use of alcohol on the premises, or for bringing pets onto the premises.
- 15 When visitors arrive, they will be asked to sign a visitors' register indicating the name of the service user being visited, the date and time of the visit and details such as a car registration number—this is to enable staff to locate the right person if it is necessary to move the car or evacuate the building.
- 16 When leaving the premises, the visitor should sign out.
- 17 Where the establishment makes facilities available for overnight stays, visitors should follow local procedures for arranging to stay as otherwise it may not be possible to accommodate them.
- 18 While the manager of the facility will endeavour to make visitors welcome, it may be that there will be restrictions on their access to areas of the establishment in order to ensure the privacy, health and safety of other service users and staff. Visitors will be alerted to any such restrictions when they sign in.

## **Responsibilities of Staff**

- 19 Staff have the following responsibilities:
  - 19.1 Staff must monitor the capacity of service users to benefit from visits on a regular basis.
  - 19.2 Where concerns exist regarding the service user's ability to make reasonable and independent choices in the context of the Mental Capacity Act 2005, the service manager must ensure a full multi-agency approach. Livability mental capacity procedures must be followed when assessing capacity of service

users to make a decision and for any best interests' decisions that are made. The service user's family/ carers will be involved in that review, as will the service user and their representative if appropriate.

- 19.3 Staff will welcome service users' visitors and must ensure that their treatment of visitors is not influenced by their personal perceptions or beliefs.
- 19.4 All staff must be aware of any agreements made with service users regarding unwanted visitors. All staff are expected to support the rights and choices of individual service users to receive or refuse visitors.
- 19.5 Wherever possible, visitors should be welcomed at times desired by the resident and facilities for private visits will be made available.
- 19.6 Staff must ensure that all service users are aware of how to arrange for drinks and meals for visitors where this is appropriate.
- 19.7 Each residential service must develop a set of simple ground rules for visitors which are made available in appropriate formats to ensure that all visitors are aware of any restrictions on their access to premises and use of facilities.
- 19.8 Restrictions on visitors access will be made on the basis of the privacy and health and safety of other service users.
- 19.9 Service users must be consulted on these ground rules.
- 19.10 Any such restrictions should be publicised to service users and to visitors.
- 19.11 Where staff observe any infringement of service ground rules, they should alert the visitor and ask that the behaviour cease. Should the visitor not respond, the member of staff should alert the person in charge or duty manager on call as appropriate, to the nature of the incident and the risk present. This person will determine any subsequent action.
- 19.12 In exceptional circumstances where an individual visitor persists in behaviour that places others at risk, causes others discomfort or distress or which is against the law, they will be asked to leave the premises. Should the person refuse to leave and/or should the visitor be placing others at significant risk consideration should be given to telephoning the police to request assistance in dealing with the immediate situation.
- 19.13 Following any such incident an incident form should be completed and the service manager must seek a meeting with the service user and the visitor concerned. The manager should consider whether the service users care manager should also be involved. The aim of the meeting will be to resolve the problem and gain a clear commitment from the visitor to abide by the ground rules for visiting.

- 19.14 Should this not resolve the problem, Livability reserves the right to bar the visitor from its premises. Any visitor who considers that they have been unfairly treated in this respect is entitled to invoke the Livability complaints procedure.
- 19.15 Should a particular visitor be barred, a brief note of his/her details and the reason for the bar will be maintained with the service user's file.
- 19.16 All staff must be aware of any barred visitors.
- 19.17 Where a residential service provides facilities for overnight visitors, information regarding overnight facilities should be included in the establishment's publicity material and flagged during induction for new service users.
- 19.18 A copy of the ground rules and actions to be taken in the event of fire or emergency should be provided and should be displayed room/s designated for overnight visitors.
- 19.19 Overnight visitors are required to alert staff on arrival and to sign out when leaving the premises.

## **Risk Assessment**

- 20 All service users should have in place risk assessments to cover any activity which places them or others at risk. In some circumstances this may include receiving visitors into their homes. All risk assessments should be completed following relevant Livability procedures and reviewed regularly.
- 21 In the context of health and safety, regular risk assessments must be undertaken to ensure that the premises are suitable and safe for visitors as well as for service users and staff.
- 22 Visitors to services may include those with a variety of abilities, disabilities and needs. Building risk assessments and arrangements in place to ensure access, privacy and safety must include any necessary arrangements to ensure equal access and information for all.

## **Implementation and Training**

- 23 It is the responsibility of service managers:
  - 23.1 To develop and publish locally ground rules for visitors and service users in line with Livability policies and procedures.
  - 23.2 To advise visitors of the local arrangements which cover visits, meals and accommodation where that is available.
  - 23.3 To ensure that new residents and their families/carers are fully briefed on local arrangements.

- 23.4 To ensure that all staff receive instruction on local and organisational procedure and ground rules as part of their induction.
  - 23.5 To ensure that staff receive training in the protection of vulnerable adults.
  - 23.6 To monitor staff practice and ensure that it remains in line with Livability procedure.
  - 23.7 To ensure that any necessary risk assessments are undertaken in order to minimise possible risk and obstacles to successful visits.
- 24 It is the responsibility of staff to:
- 24.1 Support service users to benefit from visitors.
  - 24.2 Welcome visitors and respond helpfully to enquiries.
  - 24.3 Raise any problems that arise or any concerns that they have with the person in charge or service manager as appropriate.
  - 24.4 Be aware of and support individual service users' agreements regarding receiving or refusing visitors.
  - 24.5 Ensure that they know how to respond should an incident involving service users visitors arise.

## **Standards**

- 25 The following standards apply to this procedure:
- 25.1 Ground rules for visitors are agreed with service users.
  - 25.2 Ground rules information for visitors is provided to all service users and prospective service users.
  - 25.3 Staff are provided with training on receiving visitors as part of induction.
  - 25.4 All staff are aware of any service users' individual agreements regarding receipt or refusal of visitors.
  - 25.5 Staff are provided with training on protection of vulnerable adults.
  - 25.6 Risk assessments relating to visitors are reviewed at least 6 monthly.

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Director of Operations	<i>Liz Mell</i>	October 2013

Consult the Intranet for the latest version of this procedure.

**Document Control:**

**Reviewers:**

Name	Position
Andrew Hart	AD Services for Disabled Adults (G&D)
Miriam Conway	Operations Manager
Rob Townsend	Operations Manager

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